

The Classical Bulletin

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Rev. James A. Kleist, S. J., Editor. Subscription price: One Dollar a Year.

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No. 8

Mezentius and Lausus—A Virgilian Tragedy

Among the undying glories of the Aeneid, which voices the human heart so well, is an episode beginning in the latter part of the eighth book and ending with the first lines of the eleventh: the dramatic story of king Mezentius and his son Lausus. As it holds a deep significance for us, just as much as it did for the Romans, we must, the better to appreciate this significance, be clear about Mezentius' character. We may then consider, first, his predominant fault or sin, pride; and secondly, the fatal consequences of this pride: brutality, contempt for the gods, and the stifling of a father's affection for his son.

Mezentius is a proud man. He is *asper*: rough, cruel, severe, abusive. Only a proud man can be such a tyrant, such a scoffer of the gods, as he is. His rule is described as *imperium*, which connotes complete and absolute sway. It is expressly characterized as *superbum*: Mezentius holds supreme authority and exercises it proudly and tyrannically. Pride, too, is implied in Virgil's exquisite use of figurative language, when he says:

Agyllinam . . .
hanc multos florentem annos rex deinde superbo
imperio et saevis tenuit Mezentius armis (8, 481-82).

Note the ominous *deinde*: full many a year the city had flourished, but then, alas! Mezentius ruled it with an iron hand. We almost think of one who crushes in his hand a fresh and blooming flower. From the moment that he rides forth to battle at the head of the Italian clans, until he lies dying at the feet of one mightier than himself upon the battle-field, Mezentius is an overbearing tyrant.

Pride, which is always apt to make men severe, makes Mezentius brutal. We have already noticed the implications in such words as *asper*, *imperium superbum*, *saevis armis*, and, by contrast, in *urbem florentem*. We ought also to note the spirit that animates Mezentius on the field of battle: a craving for violence and bloodshed. Over the body of the dying Orodes he stands triumphant, his foot planted on the prostrate foe, and as he strains to extract his spear from the body, he calls out to his companions in boastful glee: "Ho men! Low lies great Orodes—no mean portion of the war!" Mezentius is the man who hurls the blazing brands upon the Teucric ramparts: he is a destroyer, a man with fire in his hand.

Even before he went to war his brutality was already evident. Virgil takes no pleasure in describing the horrors of war, and is loth to picture deeds of violence and

bloodshed; yet in speaking of Mezentius he does not hesitate to narrate what must have pained him even as he wrote. Nor is it without significance that he introduces the benign and cultured king Evander as mentioning only with repugnance Mezentius' brutal deeds:

Quid memorem infandas caedes, quid facta tyranni
effera? (8, 483-84).

Things *infandae* are things that ought not to be uttered. Evander's delicate silence is more eloquent than words could be in describing the past life of a man whose hands were dripping with blood, whose soul was soiled by deeds of violence and injustice.

One savage, inhuman practice of Mezentius, however, has been so deeply burned into the imagination of Evander that he cannot refrain from mentioning it, much against his will.

Mortua quin etiam iungebat corpora vivis,
componens manibusque manus atque oribus ora,
tormenti genus, et sanie taboque fluentis
complexu in misero longa sic morte necabat
(8, 485-88).

The words need no comment: they are addressed to *pious Aeneas* by one of the Aeneid's most lovable old men.

Another natural consequence of pride is contempt for things divine. Mezentius was endowed by nature with great physical strength and an iron will. Thus, trusting in his strong right arm and in his power to rule, he centered all his attention on himself, despised the strength and the opinions of his fellow-men, and spurned the help of the gods on high. Virgil emphasizes this characteristic by repeatedly calling Mezentius a *contemptor divom*: whether we meet him in peace or in strife, whether as the arrogant tyrant or as the vanquished warrior, he is always the spurner of the gods. "History told of his demanding of the Rutulians the first fruits of the harvest, which were properly dedicated to the gods"; and this indomitable warrior, who rushes upon the battle-field like a whirlwind and fights like a famished lion, when at the end of his life he faces the mightiest of his foes, ready to do battle with the spear and the sword unto death, even then scoffs at the thought of help from the gods above:

Dextra mihi deus et telum, quod missile libro,
nunc adsint (10, 773-74).

The contrast between *pious Aeneas* and the *contemptor divom* is splendid: Aeneas fights only that he may find a dwelling place for the gods of his people, while Mezentius fights to save himself from the consequences of his

impiousness. Aeneas submits humbly and patiently to the slightest wish of the gods; Mezentius violates their most sacred decrees. Aeneas is the favorite of the gods; Mezentius is abandoned by them. And the ungodly Mezentius must die at the hands of the godly Aeneas.

The one thing that might have saved Mezentius from his own base pride, that might have drawn him out of himself and enabled him to rise above himself, the one redeeming feature in Mezentius' character, might have been a deep, fatherly affection for his son Lausus. Not that he was devoid of even the last vestige of affection; for wherever he rides in battle, he rides with Lausus at his side. But Virgil is careful to portray this stifling of fatherly affection in unmistakable terms. In describing Mezentius and Lausus going forth to battle, he remarks:

Lausus . . . dignus patriis qui laetior esset
imperii, et cui pater haud Mezentius esset (7, 653-54).

Lausus, steed-tamer, beast-destroyer,
worthy of happier service as a son,
and other than Mezentius for his sire (Rhoades).

We may fancy Lausus looking many a time into his father's eyes and longing for a gleam of fatherly affection; but Mezentius is proof against such appeals. Never did deeper gulf separate father from son: *dignus cui pater haud Mezentius esset*. And yet, what might Mezentius not have done for his child! In the management of his state he might have had his son continually in his thoughts: for him he might have planned and built. Instead of antagonizing his people and embittering them against himself and his dynasty, he might have labored to establish a reign of peace and concord, so that, when the time came, he might bequeath to his son a stabilized realm and a contented people. But of none of these things did he take thought: selfish and self-centred, he forgot and neglected his son and heir. Mezentius in his lifetime, as portrayed by Virgil, is devoid of attractive features; his heart knows neither mercy nor pity; neither love nor sacrifice; he is a man that stands apart, hated, not loved; feared, but not admired; there is nothing in him that we long to imitate; nothing, for even his courage upon the field of battle is tintured with the baseness of self-love. Virgil's Mezentius is a warning to the reader against a way of life that none ought to tread.

And yet, when all unlovely things that lower Mezentius in our esteem have been said, the figure is not altogether without appeal. He stirs our pity, because he failed to become the man that he might have been. He is in a sense a tragic figure; and, to add to the tragedy, it is only the death of his son revealed to him at his own death that brings the tragedy to light. Only when his son is dead does he betray any of the finer touches of the human heart; when his son is dead, and it is too late to make amends, we espy a gleam of sunlight in that black character and recognize the possibilities of moral greatness that had lain dormant and stifled in this man's heart all through life. Virgil seems to suggest that his career is tragic because he banished from his heart a natural and legitimate affection. Had Mezen-

tius earlier in his life shown love for his son, had he striven to purify and strengthen and develop it, he might have become one of the great heroes of the Aeneid, one to whom we might have gone for inspiration.

Mortally wounded by the spear of Aeneas, Mezentius, urged by his companions, has retired to a quiet spot along the Tiber. The bearded old warrior is dying. Trying to keep life beating in his stout frame, he staunches his wounds with water from the Tiber, eases his pounding lungs by loosing his armor about his throat, and rests his weary body by reclining against a tree. It is now at last that he forgets himself and his thoughts go out to his son. His weakness, pain, and anguish of spirit fade from before him, and there is present before his mind the image of his son, whom he last saw defending his father from the mighty blows of Aeneas. Mezentius fears for the safety of his son, and in that fear his heart is torn for the only being, as is apparent now, he had ever really loved. He glances about at the chosen youths surrounding him, hoping to read in their eyes some news of his son. He asks now one, now another, how his son fares in the fight; he keeps sending messengers to summon Lausus from the field of battle to his father's side, that he may rest secure in his boy's safety. What a change has come over Mezentius! What solicitude and tenderness suddenly steals into this tyrant's heart! Who would have thought the brutal warrior capable of this display of affection!

But we have not yet seen Mezentius at his best. Even as he looks into the face of a young comrade to learn something of his son, he hears, afar off, young men weeping and sobbing. He hears and understands: Lausus, his own son, is dead! Virgil with his subtle art has brought us to one of those intense moments which he has himself elsewhere characterized as made tragic by the *lacrimae rerum*. The old sorrowing Tuscan, until lately a hard-hearted warrior, as he clasps in his arms the warm, yet lifeless, body of his son, gives vent to the intensity of his grief:

Tantane me tennit vivendi, nate, voluptas,
ut pro me hostili paterer succedere dextrae,
quem genui? Tuane haec genitor per vulnera servor,
morte tua vivens? Heu, nunc misero mihi demum
exitium infelix! nunc alte volnus adactum!
Idem ego, nate, tuum maculavi crimine nomen,
pulsus ob invidiam solio sceptrisque paternis.
Debueram patriae poenas odiisque meorum:
omnis per mortis animam sontem ipse dedissem.
(10, 846-54).

Did then such joy of life
Possess me, O my son, that in my stead
I suffered thee, even thee whom I begat,
to meet the foeman's stroke? Am I, thy sire,
Saved through thy wounds, and living by thy death?
Ah! to my sorrow now at last I know
What exile is! now is the wound pushed home.
Yea, and I too with infamy, my son,
Thy name have spotted, by men's hate of me
Thrust from the throne and sceptre of my sires!
To mine own country and my people's spite
I should have paid the forfeit, by all deaths
Freely have yielded up this guilty life.
(Tr. Rhoades).

The death of his son is the blow that brings Mezentius to his senses. At last Mezentius, the slayer of men and the contemner of the gods, admits that he has been a fool: to all who may wish to hear, he confesses that he has wasted his days in doing evil, and sacrificed the nobler aspirations of his soul upon the altar of self-love. He regrets above all else the injustice he has done to his son, whose still, silent form he clasps to his breast. He has lived only for himself, and now at last he recognizes the failure of such a life. What might not now be his happiness, could he but look back upon a life well spent and be cheered by the thought that his son would fall heir to his father's good fortune.

The Aeneid lives forever because in it every man finds his own deepest sorrows, his own ardent hopes, portrayed with a subtle touch; and while there are numerous illustrations of Virgil's power to portray life with its burden of joy and sorrow, the story of Mezentius and his son is not the least striking of them. The king had gone through life—stifling his better self; it was only the presence of death that turned his thoughts to his long-neglected son. Is not this a glimpse of real life? And did Virgil wish to intimate that, when we are thoroughly disgusted with a character, and are accustomed to see in him the very embodiment of moral repulsiveness, even then we need not despair of finding a bright and lovable trait in him? At all events, Mezentius' death and the death of his son conspired to lay bare that man's heart. Truly, in the words of a modern poet,

A death-bed's a detector of the heart, (Young)

and, once again, all's well that ends well:

Very frankly he confessed his treasons;
Implored your . . . pardon; and set forth
A deep repentance: nothing in his life
Became him, like the leaving it.

(*Macbeth*).

St. Louis, Mo.

RICHARD T. DETERS, S. J.

Lament of a Grecian Mother

I cannot even now believe you dead
After these years, I can but think that you
Have stolen softly from your little bed
To trace your dancing feet upon the dew.
You were our child, and yet you were not ours—
You died so young; but I remember how
Your death was as the closing of the flowers,
Like orange blossoms blowing from the bough.

I loved the music of your childish words,
Your quiet laughter ringing through the hall;
The way you had of whispering to me
Is echoed in the stir of evening birds.
These dreams alone remain, and they are all,—
I am the mother of a memory.

Weston, Mass.

GEORGE C. S. O'BRIEN, S. J.

There is hardly a subject, apart from those discovered since his time, in which if you dig deep enough you will not come at last upon Aristotle.—J. A. K. Thomson

Book Reviews

Ludovicus Vives, *Lingua Latina Series*: Scenes of School and College Life in Latin Dialogues. Ed. by W. H. D. Rouse. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1931. Pp. 126. With Vocabulary of unusual words. \$1.50.

Centuries of experience have proven dialogue an effective means of teaching a language. Quaint and simple picture dialogues were used in the early monastic schools and throughout the Middle Ages. The Renaissance adopted the method widely. *Lingua Latina* is, then, a product of ancient method and an educational instrument of tried and acknowledged excellence.

The present book is a great improvement on Vives' original in point of syntax. Perhaps it might have gained by the omission or revision of a number of words for objects that are less familiar to the modern boy—as foods and clothing now out of vogue. Again, while the practice of defining words in simple Latin is highly commendable, *Vives* would perhaps be more widely useful for this country if the vocabulary were enlarged. The conversation is lively and altogether free from rigid adherence to Ciceronianisms. Wherever the direct method is applied in teaching Latin, *Vives* will be welcome as a valuable aid in creating, as far as possible, that atmosphere of real life which alone can produce in the mind of the young learner a *feeling* for language. To be learned, a language must be lived.

Florissant, Mo.

ROBERT J. HENLE, S. J.

Rome and the Romans: A Survey and Interpretation, by Grant Showerman, Ph.D. Macmillan Co., New York, 1931. Pp. 643. With copious illustrations, complete topical index, and select bibliography. \$2.40.

This rapid and interesting review of the backgrounds of Roman history and literature, embracing such topics as Geography, Professions, Arts, Government, amply justifies the first half of the sub-title. It is not so clear where the *Interpretation* and the humanistic claims of the preface are fulfilled. The high-school teacher will find the book helpful as attractive side-reading for history and Latin classes. The style is a bit wordy, but clear and easy. The many illustrations are excellent and strike eye and imagination. In a word, many useful facts are here presented in a very pleasing form.

R. J. H.

Whoever cares for a great book in a small compass, and will give it the attention that it demands; whoever can appreciate literary qualities that have fallen out of fashion but will have their turn again—masculine strength, simplicity, directness, reserve, relevancy; and, above all, the natural dignity that belongs to "the foremost man of all this world" writing the history that he had himself made—whoever cares for these things should read Caesar's *Commentaries*, and he will have his reward.—T. Rice Holmes

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Editorial

When we speak of teaching the classics as literature, we are apt to fall into a not uncommon mistake: the mistake of distinguishing too sharply between what are called the "disciplinary" and the "cultural" aspects of the study of the classics. The discipline and the culture to be derived from Latin and Greek studies are not two distinct things, except by philosophical precision; in reality the two are to a large extent mutually inclusive. Thorough discipline is a large part of culture, and real culture is unthinkable without much discipline. It is not as if the knowledge of the language—of forms, etymology, syntax (to be achieved by memory work, drill, analysis, theme work, etc.), were one thing, and the study of thought-content, literary form, artistic beauty another. There can be no real appreciation of ideas, much less of formal artistic beauty, without thorough mastery of the medium, which is language. There are no genuine aesthetic thrills to be had without an intimate knowledge of words, inflections, syntax, idiom. In fact, the artistry lies very largely in the words themselves, their collocation, their happy combination, their power of suggestion, and often in their mere sound and rhythm. Consequently, when teaching words, forms, etymology, syntax in high school, we are handling the raw materials of all the literary thrills to come. It is important, therefore, to teach even first-high matter with this in view. Neat phrases, suggestive and onomatopoeic words, picturesque metaphors, striking idioms, expressive constructions, these and many

other of the "elements" of literature will occur even in the work of first year high, and they will go on appearing more frequently in each successive year of Latin and Greek study. The teacher who is bent on teaching the classics as literature will not overlook these opportunities.

The question is sometimes asked: "In what classes has literary interpretation of the classics a place?" The answer to that question would seem obvious: "In all classes, from first year on." Of course, the emphasis will shift more and more in that direction, as more Latin or Greek is mastered and more real literature is read. In the syntax taught in third year, and in fourth-year Virgil, surely, there is plenty of room for it; still more so in the college classes—provided always that the fundamental work has been well done and the literary point of view gradually inculcated from the very first.

Teaching the classics as literature means especially bringing out and emphasizing the beauty of the ideas and of the form of expression. Great literature is an interpretation of life, especially of what is beautiful, noble, inspiring in life. Truth to life, truth to psychology, the abiding human qualities, the natural virtues, the common failings of men, their loftiest aspirations, their most characteristic sorrows and joys—these are some of the things that call for stressing and interpretation. How all these things are aptly, beautifully, forcibly, clearly, euphoniously expressed by means of the inherent power, suggestiveness, and harmony of words and phrases, by the legitimate use of rhetoric, etc.—this it is the function of the teacher of literature to bring out. Moreover, even the religious, moral, and philosophical training that the true teacher always strives to impart, can be much furthered and largely attained through the teaching of the classics as literature.

Sane and experienced teachers of literature will not allow themselves to be deterred by the "evangel of objectivity" in teaching, so characteristic of our time, from telling a class of high-school or college students that something is beautiful or true. They will not think it bad form, or spoon-feeding, or dogmatism, or the forcing of their own subjective impressions on others, to show red-blooded enthusiasm for what is really fine. Boys and girls of high-school and college age need the stimulus of the teacher's enthusiastic appreciation to draw out and develop their own aesthetic sense. Moreover, common sense tells us that there are certain objective standards and values in the realm of aesthetics as well as in that of truth. The traditional way is to point these out fearlessly and explain them to young developing minds and hearts. If the students are normal, they will respond. There is surely no need of presenting everything impersonally, in order not to interfere with a pupil's developing personality or originality. Better give young people principles and traditional estimates, which have the sanction of the ages to build upon. This will give them at least something definite to start with. These traditional estimates are generally correct anyhow, as we often find to our astonishment in the end, after having perhaps rebelled against them at the outset. These

principles and estimates the student can and should qualify and adapt to his own tastes and ideas as he grows more mature. The bane of teaching in high school and college is vagueness, indefiniteness, refusal on the part of the teacher to express any positive conviction or opinion of his own. Such an attitude towards students presupposes a development and maturity which in nine cases out of ten does not yet exist. And even if it did exist, would it not be sounder pedagogy for the teacher not to hesitate to state his own convictions, together with his reasons for them, without of course forcing them upon his pupils?

It must always be remembered, moreover, that the very first condition for teaching the classics as literature is that the teacher himself know the classics thoroughly and appreciate them as literature. This knowledge and this appreciation should grow from year to year as he teaches. Consequently he must be a hard student. He must assiduously use his commentators, his unabridged dictionary, his books of synonyms, his comprehensive grammars—above all, his experience of life and his imagination. Only the teacher who prepares thus for every class, and perseveres in such preparation, will succeed in effectively teaching the classics as literature.

Continued demand has necessitated our reprinting, in mimeographed form, *The Sixth Book of the Aeneid: An Appreciation* from Volume VI of THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN, issues of January and February, 1930. The article presents a happy method of approach to the problem of teaching Virgil, treating the sixth book from a triple viewpoint: the position and function of the book in the economy of the whole Aeneid; the book as an artistic and structural unit; its beauties of style, diction, rhythm, and atmosphere. The sympathetic and appreciative attitude of the writer makes it very much worthwhile for any teacher of Virgil, whether or not he or she be teaching the sixth book specifically. The price, post-paid, is fifteen cents.

Royalty in Rags

It appears from the *Frogs* that Aristophanes detested Euripides' way of exciting compassion by an exhibition of the paraphernalia of misery. In lines 1062 ff., Aeschylus laments the fact that certain good old customs he himself had established, namely, the worthy expression of great and worthy thoughts and sentiments, the wearing of the long and padded robe, the high ἐμβάτης and the imposing mask, have all been abolished by Euripides. And how? "First of all, by clothing kings in rags, so that they might be pitiable in the eyes of men." Aristophanes had made the same charge earlier in the play (vv. 842 and 846), when he called Euripides "a poet of beggars and a stitcher of rags" and an "introducer of lame characters." His whole attitude towards this aspect of Euripidean tragedy may be summed up in his words in the *Acharnians* (vv. 464 and 470): "Take away the rags from Euripides' characters, and his plays are gone." Manifestly such criticism is a gross exaggeration and, though many of Euripides' plays that

Aristophanes saw are lost, we should in fairness try to get the comedian's point of view without doing an injustice to the tragedian.

We know that Oeneus, Philoctetes, Bellerophon, Telephus, Thyestes, Ino, and others, were brought upon the stage in rags and poverty, and of these Bellerophon, Philoctetes, and Telephus were lame to boot. As for the *Telephus*, it had apparently the misfortune of being witnessed by Aristophanes, then a lad of about sixteen. At any rate, the comedian never forgot it, a fact known chiefly from his numerous parodies. The *Telephus* struck out a new style in Attic drama, the style of adventure and plot interest, which threw to the winds the traditional tragic pomps and dignities. Up to that time convention required the clothing of tragic characters in an elaborate priestly dress with ritual masks, carefully graduated according to the rank of the wearer. These trappings were an inheritance from the magico-religious days of tragedy and were never, even in its most vital period, thrown off completely. For us it is difficult to form a clear notion of what an ordinary Greek tragedy looked like in 438, so that we cannot tell how marked the change in dress was which the *Telephus* introduced; but a change there was, and one, too, that raised a storm of comment and criticism.

Telephus was king of Mysia, not very far from the Troad. The Greeks in sailing for Troy missed their way and by mistake invaded Telephus' country. The king offered a vigorous resistance, but was wounded by Achilles' magic spear. The wound would not close, and an oracle told Telephus that "the wounder shall heal." By that time the Greeks had returned to Greece and were planning a fresh invasion of Troy. Lame and disguised as a beggar, the king goes into the heart of the Greek army and enters Agamemnon's palace. Since he had to be a beggar, Euripides naturally dressed him as a beggar, with rags and a wallet. It is hard to see what else the poet could have done; but out of respect for Aristophanes, we may suppose that this beggar's dress was a little more realistic, and a little less purely symbolical, than was warranted by tragic custom; and this "little," moreover, was enough matter for scorn and ridicule in the eyes of so inveterate a parodist as Aristophanes. In other words, Aristophanes' "kings in rags" is a caricature pure and simple and, like every caricature drawing, merely overemphasizes an otherwise true and not necessarily contemptible characteristic trait. We may grant that, according to the best Greek taste, the truly artistic manner of arousing pity and fear is by means of the structure of the play and the inherent appeal of the tragic situation. Yet this means of arousing those passions, though essential, is not the only legitimate one. At all events, tragic emotion may be stirred up by certain conventional outward signs and by a direct appeal to the eye; and it was precisely with a view to arousing this emotion by these outward means that Euripides, the most human of the three tragedians, depicted humble and suffering heroes. This was an innovation in tragic drama, and it must have startled the critics of the time, as it did Aristophanes. Yet, twenty-three years later, Sophocles himself depicted king Oedi-

pus as reduced to beggary, and afflicted with a cruel infirmity, as Euripides had represented Oeneus and Bellerophon respectively. Sophocles' Philoctetes, too, was dressed in rags as in Euripides' play of the same name, and all this was no doubt done to the perfect satisfaction of the audience.

Euripides, who, in his endeavor to be "real" and "human," had the courage to break away from the stiff mould of the Aeschylean characters, drew upon himself the ridicule of the comic writers of fifth century Athens and, in particular, of Aristophanes. Of the latter's eleven extant works, three are devoted to the tragedian in their entirety, while not one of them fails to give him at least a passing mention. To Euripides fell the usual lot of one who sows in labor that others may reap in joy. Fame and acclaim came to him when only his spirit was left to enjoy them. Once again, a prophet had been without honor in his own country.

Weston, Mass.

GEORGE A. KING, S. J.

A Patristic Series for Creighton University

The departments of Greek and Latin at Creighton University are sponsoring a program for extensive studies in the Christian Greek and Latin writers, in addition to the usual work in the ancient classics. This includes readings, to be followed by studies, for undergraduate students, no less than for men of a more advanced standing. Beginning for the current year with a course in the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, we believe that readings will by and by be extended so as to cover the works of other writers, Greek as well as Latin.

The study of the Christian authors is a tempting field for the research scholar. Anyone who has had experience with the Ph. D. studies now being conducted in our universities is aware of the dearth of suitable subjects for research. The field of pagan language and literature, after a hundred years of intensive cultivation in a hundred great universities of Europe and America, is being more and more depleted. At rare intervals, it is true, some author, like Herondas, is unearthed, or some work, like Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens*, comes to light, and for a moment the ancient letters revive with a fresh impetus. But on the whole there is little ancient writing of really great value that has not been analyzed, assayed, and fairly torn to shreds, in an effort to extract every possible ounce of material for research purposes.

In our state universities and in private schools of the same class, scholars have on the whole avoided the field of Christian writers. The avoidance is in part due to a failure to see the real value in the matter; in other cases it is deliberate. Being unacquainted with the literature of the Christian writers, scholars whose preoccupation has been pagan Latin and Greek are not at once prepared to orient themselves in this new field. After all, Christianity and antiquity are two different worlds. Nevertheless some noteworthy strides have been made in recent times in various universities, particularly at Princeton and Harvard; also at Oxford and Cam-

bridge the Christian writers receive attention; so too in various schools on the European continent. But in the United States, the only university that has thus far cultivated this branch of the Greek and Latin literatures systematically is the Catholic University of America, which in the past ten years has produced some thirty dissertations dealing with subjects of research.

It is hoped that in the departments of Greek and Latin of Creighton University a school of studies with similar aims can be built up in the West. There are still many problems awaiting solution, many questions for which we desire an answer. The world has long labored under the delusion—zealously fostered by men like Gibbon, Hume, and Lecky—that the early Fathers were ignorant fanatics but little removed from savagery, that their attitude toward paganism was one of stupid destructiveness, that they were incapable, partly by nature partly by reason of their religion, of comprehending the fineness of a Homer or a Cicero. Much has been done to destroy these chimeras, but much still remains to be done. We know too little about the interest that churchmen have felt in the pagan classics, too little about the social and economic environment in which Christianity has grown up. We have no exhaustive inquiry into the powerful civic influences that have radiated from Christian centres. We should like to know more accurately how the culture of some converts from paganism affected the Christian communities into which they entered. And when all this has been investigated, the writings of the Christian authors have yet to be considered as fine literature.

In brief, the field yet to be explored is immense. In sheer bulk the writings of the Christians have several times the quantity of work left by pagan antiquity. Every effort to stimulate interest in Christian Greek and Latin literature will in the end be productive of much good. In this as in any other branch of learning, formal studies must clear the way for the young student. We are as yet sadly in need of a grammar of patristic Latin and Greek; nor have we special and up-to-date lexica covering the ground.

The study of the Christian Greek and Latin authors, while a prize *καίμενον ἐν μέσσοις*, is yet a province peculiarly Catholic; for Catholic schools, such as Creighton University, have by reason of the traditions of the Church that initial sympathy with the patristic point of view which is a great help towards success in this department of scholarship.

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What is meant by the vague praise so often bestowed on Virgil's unequalled style is practically this, that he has been, perhaps, more successful than any other poet in fusing together the expressed and the suggested emotion; that he has discovered the hidden music which can give to every shade of feeling its distinction, its permanence, and its charm; that his thoughts seem to come to us on the wings of melodies prepared for them from the foundation of the world.—F. W. H. Myers

A Valuable Aid to Teaching Latin in the High School

Anyone who has to explain the Greek and Latin classics will find a valuable aid to efficient teaching in the use he makes in the classroom of the ancient colometric style of composition. Ancient thought and sentiment were bound up with the ancient forms of expression, and among these colometric sentence structure holds by far the most important place. A certain amount of accurate knowledge concerning the nature of ancient colometry is, therefore, indispensable. To make this paper as practical as I can, I wish to comment on a (perhaps neglected) chapter in F. G. Moore's *Orations of Cicero*, and then add references to further literature on the same subject.

Moore discusses Cicero's mastery of form under the headings "Periodic Structure," "The Period in English," "The Period in Latin," "Rhythm," and "Rhetorical Features." As a specimen of a Ciceronian period Moore offers the following colometrized selection from the third Catilinian:

Rem publicam, Quirites,
vitamque omnium vestrum
bona fortunas / coniuges liberosque vestros
atque hoc domicilium clarissimi imperi
fortunatissimam pulcherrimamque urbem
hodierno die / deorum immortalium
summo erga vos amore
laboribus consiliis periculis meis
e flamma atque ferro
ac paene e faucibus fati ereptam
et vobis conservatam ac restitutam videtis.

Moore remarks that "This elaborate period presented its thought to the hearer in eleven members (*cola* or *membra*) of varying length. It is periodic in the most modern sense of the term, as well as according to Greek and Roman definitions. At least two of the members may be divided into two parts (*commata* or *incisa*), the shorter preceding the longer."

In Moore's division of the period into eleven *cola*, several accusative objects of the verb *videtis* are brought into separate and well-deserved prominence. First comes the stately *res publica*, which to a typical Roman (*Quirites*) was identical with the *vita omnium* (*civium*). There follow, neatly balanced, two *commata*, joined to form one colon, each containing the mention of two of the most precious possessions of a Roman: *bona fortunas* and *coniuges liberique*, the first pair being asyndetic, the second joined by *-que*. The Romans were proud of their City at all times; Cicero's mention of the *Urbs* here served, no doubt, the useful purpose of insuring to him, as to the "Pater Patriae," the hearty support of the populace in an hour of destiny that had saved Rome from destruction. As colon one and two, so colon four and five are practically isocola, their number of syllables (seven and thirteen respectively) being equal. Another very obvious colometric division pictures the horrible abyss into which Rome must of necessity have fallen—but for the ever-vigilant consul: *flamma atque ferrum* and *faucibus fati*. In either colon the reader's horror is deepened by alliteration, just as in English

poetry repeated *f*'s in certain contexts "give a feeling of horror and affright" (Pritchard). The magnificent rhetorical flourish in colon eleven depicts the everlasting benefits which the speaker has bestowed on his country: Cicero has saved Rome; Cicero has restored the tottering republic.

In a Latin composition, as I have indicated elsewhere (see the *CLASSICAL BULLETIN*, January, 29 ff.), the lines of division between colon and colon are sometimes made doubtful for us by the intrusion of the speaker's emotion. An ancient period is not only a logical, but occasionally an emotional unit, both as a whole and in its divisions. In other words, proper delivery must be allowed to shift the limits of colon and comma somewhat to suit the emotion of a given passage. Unless one bears this in mind, Moore's treatment of what is now colon six may seem strange, for here the phrase *deorum immortalium* is separated, as a comma, from its grammatical concomitant *summo erga vos amore*. Mere reasoning would prefer to join the subjective genitive to the noun (*amore*) on which it depends; yet Moore separates the genitive and adds it as a comma to another commatic phrase. Thus Cicero is made to direct our attention to "this day, this memorable day, on which the immortal gods (have saved us)." The manner or motive of their saving interposition is given in colon seven: *summo erga vos amore*. Judged by what St. Augustine tells us of emotion as a factor in all colometrization, a division like this is indeed possible and hence legitimate. Whether it actually reflects Cicero's own mind in delivering or writing the passage is a question that cannot be answered. We may perhaps suppose that in his own delivery he reserved an entire colon for *hodierno die*, to bring out the unique significance of this red-letter day on which the republic was saved. Now, if the phrase *deorum immortalium* is brought over into the next line, there arises a chiasmic arrangement that puts Cicero into direct relation with the immortal gods: it was *they* that saved the country by their supreme love for Rome, but it was *Cicero*, the Roman consul and vigilant statesman, that carried out their beneficent design by his toil, his political wisdom, and at the peril of his life:

*deorum immortalium summo erga vos amore
laboribus consiliis periculis meis.*

Moore's analysis of Cicero's period suggests another observation. In analyzing a Greek or Latin passage *per cola et commata*, we look instinctively for groups of words held together by syntax. Thus in the sentence *Si ignis est animus exstinguetur*, it is natural to see two *cola*, the one a conditional clause, the other the main sentence. But it is important to know (and this is the point brought out by Moore's analysis) that colon (or comma) and clause are not necessarily synonymous terms. Quite frequently much less than what we call a clause is enough to form a colon; in fact less than what we regard as a "sentence" may be enough for a "period," because a Latin or Greek period may lie embedded within the grammatical structure called a sentence. Again, the subject of a sentence may be in one colon, while the rest is in another; or, again, one colon

may contain the accusative object of a sentence, while another contains the subject. With all their rigid adherence to colometric composition, the best Greek and Latin writers gave themselves great freedom in varying their sentence structures.

Since Aristotle defines the period as a structure "that has a beginning and an end in itself," it should be possible to find those two elements in Cicero's period analyzed above. Roughly speaking, we may say that Aristotle's "beginning" and "end" correspond to what elsewhere we style protasis and apodosis. If we analyze a sentence like "si ignis est animus, exstinguetur," the protasis answers to Aristotle's "beginning," while the apodosis corresponds to his "end." At all events, the conditional clause starts a sentence movement by raising a question in our minds, while the brief but weighty main clause brings this sentence movement to a satisfactory end by setting our minds at rest. If we apply this theory to the period from the third Catilinian, the question may be asked, where we are to find that break in the long passage which separates the end of the "beginning" from the beginning of the "end." That we should know this is important—for it is there that we have to make a perceptible pause in our delivery and mark this pause by a change of tone. Now, since the five first cola contain each an object to the principal verb *videtis*, it seems natural to group them together as a logical unit, and therefore see the break of the period at the end of colon five. With colon six a fresh sentence movement sets in which satisfies the question that has been in the mind of the hearer (or reader) from the moment of the mention of the first accusative object. Strictly speaking, in order to tell the end from the beginning, we should consult the rhythm of the movement, but Ciceronian rhythm is still too obscure a matter to be of much service as a criterion.

In the selection from Cicero here discussed every one of the eleven cola is an integral part of the period; but it should be noted that the terms colon and comma may be applied to portions of sentences or phrases that are not strictly periodic. Quite frequently a sentence begins in the loose or running style, and continues or ends with a period.

It is not my purpose in this paper to explain the many advantages connected with the reading of a Latin author in the classroom by means of a colometrized text. I will call attention to the fact, however, that according to St. Jerome, who lived at the end of the fourth century, the teachers of Greek and Latin literature in his day (the so-called rhetoricians) were in the habit of colometrizing "Demosthenes and Tullius" for the benefit of their pupils, and that it was this method of teaching that induced St. Jerome to write his new version of the entire Bible, the so-called Vulgate, *per cola et commata*. Evidently, if those learned men whose mother-tongue was Latin or Greek, and who were much nearer in time to the old classics than we are, could find advantages in presenting their pupils with a colometrized text, instead of a text written in our modern (that is, the stichometric) form, we are not wrong in suspecting that

the colometric method of teaching has much to commend it. Besides, since the Latin and Greek authors actually composed *per cola et commata*, it cannot be wrong for us to write and read their compositions *per cola et commata*. If we wish to make our students realize vividly how a given Latin composition took shape in the mind of its author, we shall do well to insist on their analyzing this same composition *per cola et commata*. Theorists are urging us to train our pupils to "read Latin as Latin": is there a method better calculated to achieve this happy result than reading Latin *per cola et commata*? Teachers of many years' experience have confessed that, ever since they are using the colometric style of reading, they are able to cover twice as much ground as before. With one pupil at the blackboard working on the colometrization of a passage, and the rest of the class busily engaged in the same work at their desks, and at the same time watching their classmate at the board, it is difficult to see how such intense occupation can fail to bring the students face to face with real Latin. And after colometrizing a passage, the teacher need not worry about what we style "translation"—with all its fumbings, errors, and deficiencies: the Latin text *as such* will imprint itself indelibly on mind and memory alike, and if the text presents obscurities, the process of colometrization will bring them out and clear them up—with the ever-ready help of the teacher.

The following list of papers and books may be recommended for additional readings on ancient colometry:

"Reading Latin and Greek with Proper Pauses": *Classical Bulletin*, VI, 29.

"Quintilian on Reading Latin with Pauses": *ib.*, 62.

"Emotion—An Important Element in Colometry": *ib.*, VIII, 29.

Mignonette Spilman, "Learning to Read Latin in the Latin Order": *Classical Journal*, February, 1929.

F. G. Moore, *Orations of Cicero*, Ginn and Co. Introduction.

C. D. Adams, *Lysias*, American Book Co. Appendix 344 ff.

Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III, ch. 9 (Loeb Library).

Demetrius, *On Style*, sections 1-35 (Loeb).

Quintilian, *Instit. Orat.*, IX, ch. iv, 22 and 121 ff.

St. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana Liber Quartus*, section 11 ff. (edit. Sr. Sullivan, Cath. U. of America).

L. Laurand, *Discours de Cicéron*, Tome II. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 95 Boulevard Raspail.

Genung's *The Working Principles of Rhetoric* (*passim*) is very valuable for all questions of rhetoric, and so is, for rhetorical interpretation, Pritchard, *Studies in Literature* (Harrap and Co., London).

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To philosophers the self-evident ceases to be so, and their effort is to know what everybody seemed to know before.—A. C. Bradley

